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# STORYTELLING COMPETITION



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## SAVE THE DATE

**12-9-20 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. MST**

**One evening. Seven of the most powerful stories of resilience from the heart of Indian Country. Come and up-vote your favorite story. Watch for event details by registering for the IAC Virtual Conference BELOW.**

**FOR INSTRUCTIONS, GO TO:**

**<https://www.indianag.org/storytelling-competition>**

## RESILIENCY THROUGH AGRICULTURE STORYTELLING COMPETITION

MEET THE STORYTELLING PANEL & PARTNERS

**What is resilience? A cherished term by scientists and policy makers? A tiresome buzzword?**

*Or is resilience sleeping in the bed of your truck in the inhospitable depths of February in Montana while 100-mile an hour Chinook winds rage, just to make sure your cows and horses make it through the night?*

*Is resilience deciding what to do next after waiting out a storm only to find that your fields are under water from an unprecedented flood?*

*Is resilience fending off the predatory loan sharks who have come to repossess the family ranch your grandfather handed down through the generations?*

*Is resilience feeding your neighbors during severe economic downturn?*

Here's what we know. Some of the most profound truths and impossibly complex ideas are best conveyed through stories. We also know that Indian Country is chock full of beautiful storytellers. Add to that, Native farmers and ranchers are some of the toughest people in the world, having fought off land thieves and opportunists, outwitted and outlived malevolent government officials, and stewarded harsh environments for millennia. We want to know what resilience is . . . **to you.**

## Event Description:

On December 9, 2020 at 4 p.m. MST, join us for an evening of riveting storytelling. A panel of expert storytellers, activists, and agriculturalists will have selected seven of the most powerful stories that illustrate the theme: Resiliency through Agriculture.

Authors of the selected stories will read each story, (approximately 10 minutes in length), aloud to the audience.

Participants can elect to receive a Native Food Box with tasty treats and an IAC Resiliency through Agriculture t-shirt. All submitted stories will be reviewed by the panel, organized by theme, and submitted for publication into an anthology of Native resilience.

## Want to submit a story?

Here's how it works. We know that some prefer to write stories and others have crafted the fine art of spoken word.

**Stories will be accepted until November 23, midnight MST.**

**For the writing types,** go to the submission link below and attach a word document no more than five pages in length, double-spaced (that's about 10 minutes in live reading time) that answers the "what is resilience?" question, particularly in terms of food and agriculture.

**For the spoken word types,** you can record your story (no more than 10 minutes in length) and send us an audio file (.WAV, .AIFF, .MP3) also via the submission link.

**Selection process:** Stories will be reviewed first by an internal panel of IAC staff to ensure submissions adhere to the basic criteria (page length/topic) who will then send stories to the expert panel for final review and selection.

**Basic criteria includes:** adherence to instructions while selection criteria looks for things like, "Is my way of seeing things permanently changed because of this story?" "Will this story help us understand the true meaning of resilience, beyond the buzzwords?" "Are the hairs standing up on my arms?"

***We will do our absolute best to include all stories in our final, published anthology. Stories that do not meet the criteria will be returned to the author.***

**Tips:** Don't just answer the question. Give us all you've got. Get gritty. Tell us about a time when food and agriculture were the means for some sort of survival, survivance, or pathway back to health and culture. We prefer non-fiction (a real, true story) but will happily take fiction (a creative, although 'untrue' story that tells a bigger truth).

Please submit your story here by November 23: [Resiliency through Agriculture Storytelling Competition form link](#)

Are you interested in sponsoring this event? Click this: [IAC 2020 Sponsorship Link](#)

Do you want to listen in and up-vote your favorite story on December 1, 2020 at 4 p.m. MST? Register for the IAC Virtual Conference here: <https://www.indianag.org/events>

More information about this event will be coming in the weeks ahead. Thank you!

# MEET THE STORYTELLING PANEL AND IAC'S STORYTELLING PARTNERS

## Our Partners

We are pleased to announce that the [Montana Historical Society](#) will partner with IAC to promote the Storytelling Competition and has dedicated a staff member, Debra Mitchell of Outreach and Interpretation, to serve on the review panel that will select the final stories. The Montana Historical Society has served as the official keeper of Montana's story since 1865 and is responsible for publishing the award-winning quarterly, [Montana: The Magazine of Western History](#) that contains articles on the history of Montana and the West.

As a symbolic gesture of supporting Native creativity, [Humanities Montana](#), a highly respected mainstay of arts and culture, is sponsoring cash prizes for the final seven storytellers. The panel unanimously decided to distribute prizes evenly to all seven finalists. The cache of prizes currently consists of \$1,000 from Humanities Montana, IAC 'schwag', and IAC American Indian Foods food boxes stocked with gourmet foods. Panel members generously offered to add signed copies of their books and other items to the prize cache. The recognition the authors will receive for their work will be invaluable, especially given their selection by notable published authors and creative professionals, so please get your stories submitted by November 23rd. Instructions can be found [HERE](#).

**Why Submit? Why Attend? The Significance of This Event**

### ***Why Submit? Why Attend? The Significance of This Event***

The 1960s-80s brought about the [Native American Renaissance in literature](#), giving rise to notable authors such as N. Scott Momaday, Leslie Marmon Silko, Gerald Vizenor, and Montana's own James Welch. Native audiences viewed this generation of works as important for bringing truths about the Post-colonial/Post-settlement experience to light and reminding readers of the contemporary presence and identities of Native peoples. Common sites of resistance and demonstrations of resilience are found on the actual lands managed by Native people holding on to life-giving traditions centered around food and food production. These voices are often omitted from published narratives and yet we find they constitute the force of a creative wave that has steadily risen over the last decade and is set to crest any moment. That moment is now.

The COVID pandemic may have incited widespread distress, isolation, and sickness but it also revealed the profound resilience of Native peoples, especially through their food production practices that are so deeply rooted in place and culture. The world is now turning to these practices, strategies, and knowledge of Native people as the solution. We wish to highlight some of those through this storytelling event. The event on December 9th allows the public to avail of the collective wisdom and strength of Native communities. Our longer term project that we seek to publish, an anthology of Native resilience, creates a rare opportunity to appreciate voices outside of the canon of authors who have access to publishing presses and editors, giving a more vibrant picture of Native life and a guidebook through difficult times. Stories submitted for the event on December 9th including those selected for the top tier stories make up the content of the anthology that will be organized by theme during the process of ranking stories.

### **The Panel**

Last but certainly not least, we would like to introduce our panel members. We are beyond honored that these talented individuals are joining us. A review panel composed of IAC staff will review stories for adherence to instructions and rank stories according to criteria that situates submissions in the top, middle, or lower tiers. IAC panel members consist of Zachary Ducheneaux, Executive Director, Kari Jo Lawrence, Director of Programs, Donita Fischer, Director of Operations and Finance, Latashia Redhouse, Director of American Indian Foods, Micaela Young, Director of Development, Matthew Denetclaw, Navajo Region Technical Assistance Specialist, and Kerry Hoffschneider, Marketing and Communications Specialist. Many IAC staff members are engaged in food and agriculture production and bring a unique perspective to the work. IAC panel bios can be found [HERE](#).

The top tier stories will be submitted to an expert panel for final review and selection for the top seven stories. The panel consists of the following members with new members currently in the onboarding process:

- » **[Eugene Brave Rock](#)**, Kainai Nation actor in the 2017 blockbuster hit, Wonder Woman and co-founder of The Blackfoot Language Revival and the Oki Language Project
- » **[Martin Reinhardt](#)**, Anishinaabe Ojibway citizen of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians from Michigan, Professor of Native American Studies at the University of Michigan, and author of The Decolonizing Diet Project Cookbook (2015)
- » **[Gordon Henry](#)**, enrolled member of the White Earth Anishinaabe Nation in Minnesota, Professor of Creative Writing and Native American Literature, and recipient of the American Book Award for his novel The Light People (1994)
- » **[Buck Jones](#)**, a subsistence fisherman and member of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission who fought for decades to reclaim the river and the salmon for the benefit of fisheries Tribes in the Northwest
- » **[Craig Ironpipe](#)**, Blackfeet Nation rancher and actor who starred in films such as War Party (1988), Geronimo: An American Legend (1993) and Blood Trail (2005)
- » **[Gidigaa bizhiw \(Jerry Jondreau\)](#)**, traditional rice harvester and activist for Anishinaabeg to retain treaty reserved harvesting rights in the Keweenaw Bay waters of Lake Superior
- » **[David Weiden](#)**, an enrolled member of the Sicangu Lakota Nation and author of the novel Winter Counts, a New York Times Book Review Editors' Choice and named one of the Best Books of 2020 by Publishers Weekly
- » **[Ben Jacobs](#)**, visionary entrepreneur, member of the Osage Nation of Oklahoma, and co-owner of Tocabe: An American Indian Eatery based in Denver Colorado
- » **[Deb Mitchell](#)**, Outreach and Interpretation Specialist, Montana Historical Society

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